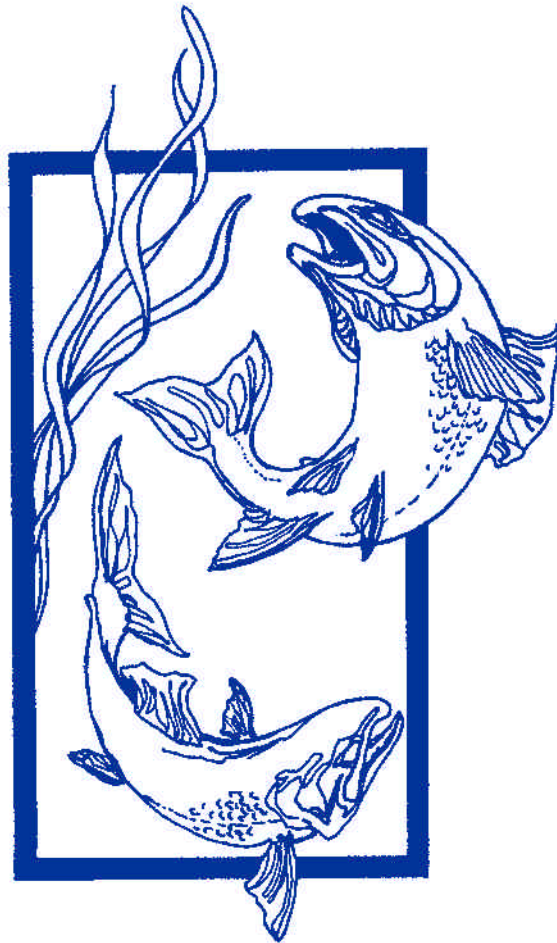


Field Manual

for the

Investigation of Fish Kills



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Field Manual for the Investigation of Fish Kills

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Preface

Fish kills are graphic evidence of serious problems in a lake or stream. If the kill is related to the presence of toxic chemicals, there may be human health concerns, in addition to the obvious damage to the ecosystem and the fisheries resources. Depending on the cause of a fish kill, legal and economic ramifications may be involved. If the kill is caused by human or corporate actions, litigation is likely to follow, with possible court-awarded damages and assessed costs for cleanup and restoration.

Federal and State agencies have expressed the need for a compendium of known and accepted methods and techniques that should be followed by anyone investigating a fish kill. This manual is an attempt to fill that need. It addresses the many facets involved in a fish kill investigation and provides instruction, guidance, examples, and sample forms that can be used.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to provide this manual to help fisheries biologists and others prepare for a fish kill investigation. Research and Development (Region 8) has cooperated with the Division of Environmental Contaminants in Fish and Wildlife Enhancement to provide expertise and funds. We hope that the manual proves to be useful for interpreting evidence at the site of a fish kill, gathering needed evidence and data, making the final determination of the cause and needed remedial and corrective actions, and preparing for appearance as a court witness.

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